

THE RELIGION OF ISRAEL, A MANUAL

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The Religion of Israel, a Manual by J. Knappert & Richard A. Armstrong

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J. KNAPPERT & RICHARD A. ARMSTRONG

**THE RELIGION OF
ISRAEL, A MANUAL**

THE
RELIGION OF ISRAEL,

A Manual;

TRANSLATED FROM THE DUTCH OF

J. KNAPPERT,

PASTOR AT LEIDEN;

BY

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE Appendix which will be found at the end of this little volume forms, in the Dutch original, the second section of a systematic catechism on the history of religion, drawn up by H. G. Hagen, W. Scheffer, R. Koopmans van Boekeren, and J. Knappert, pastors of the Reformed Church of Holland. The book here translated is a guide or key to that section of the catechism and to that section only, and was prepared by the last-mentioned of these associated authors subsequently to the catechism itself. Hence a certain baldness and angularity which unquestionably characterize it. Dr. Knappert has contented himself with simply following Prof. Kuenen in this work, without introducing the speculations or opinions of other scholars. A better guide through the labyrinth of Israelitish history he could not have found, had he searched the world through. Those who desire a fuller exposition of the literary and historical views here propounded will find it in Prof. Kuenen's great work on the Religion of Israel, an English version of which has been published, by Messrs. Williams and Norgate, in the Theological Translation Fund Library.

The present translation is literal, except in one or two cases where I have made verbal alterations necessitated by the fact that, while the work appears in English by itself, in the Dutch it is but one link in the chain of manuals to the catechism mentioned above. This same fact has led me to add a very few explanatory foot-notes of my own. But I have, in each instance, signified that the note is mine by appending the letters [Tr.].

A compressed work of this kind necessarily confines itself chiefly to the mere statement of critical conclusions, without exhibiting the facts and arguments which have led to them. When we further reflect that the book expresses the convictions of a school of critics, who, however assured their ultimate victory, are still regarded by many with dislike and suspicion and branded as "destructive," we cannot but fear that there may be those who will be painfully startled by some of the statements made in the following pages. I have, however, undertaken the translation of this little book in the conviction that its general position is absolutely unassailable, even though I may not concur in every opinion expressed in it, and that the immense majority of its statements are such as are every year becoming more indisputable. It appears to me to be profoundly important that the youthful English mind should be faithfully and accurately informed of the results of modern research into the early development of the

Israelitish religion. Deplorable and irreparable mischief will be done to the generation now passing into manhood and womanhood, if their educators leave them ignorant or loosely informed on these topics; for they will then be rudely awakened by the enemies of Christianity from a blind and unreasoning faith in the supernatural inspiration of the Scriptures; and, being suddenly and bluntly made aware that Abraham, Moses, David, and the rest did not say, do, or write what has been ascribed to them, they will fling away all care for the venerable religion of Israel and all hope that it can nourish their own religious life. How much happier will those of our children and young people be who learn what is now known of the actual origin of the Pentateuch and the Writings, from the same lips which have taught them that the Prophets indeed prepared the way for Jesus, and that God is indeed our Heavenly Father! For these will without difficulty perceive that God's love is none the feebler and that the Bible is no less precious, because Moses knew nothing of the Levitical legislation, or because it was not the warrior monarch on his semi-barbaric throne, but some far later son of Israel, who breathed forth the immortal hymn of faith, "The Lord is my Shepherd: I shall not want."

Works like the present are to be regarded by no means as substitutes for the study of the Bible, but as aids to it; and that study will only the more enlarge the mind and

expand the soul, as a freer spirit of inquiry and a fuller information are brought to its pursuit.

It only remains to state that this translation has been undertaken with the kind sanction of Dr. Knappert; and that I have enjoyed the assistance of the Rev. Philip H. Wicksteed, M.A., so far as to give me some confidence that I have faithfully represented the original which I have had before me, but not so far as to fix on him any responsibility for inaccuracies which may, in spite of my care, still remain.

R. A. A.

Nottingham, *January, 9, 1877.*

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